

Message Text

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PAGE 01 CANBER 08559 290409Z

65

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SUBJ: PRESS COMMENT ON JAMES W. HARGROVE

1. SYDNEY MORNING HERALD, MONDAY DECEMBER 29 PRINTED THE FOLLOWING ARTICLE WRITTEN BY THEIR STAFF CORRESPONDENT IAN HICKS IN WASHINGTON.

2. QTE. MR. JAMES W. HARGROVE, WHO HAS BEEN NAMED AS THE NEW U.S. AMBASSADOR TO AUSTRALIA, HOPES THE CHANGE OF GOVERNMENT IN CANBERRA WILL LEAD TO A MORE ENCOURAGING CLIMATE FOR AMERICAN INVESTMENT IN AUSTRALIA.

3. QTE. INNER QTE. I THINK THE QUESTION OF THE CLIMATE FOR INVESTMENT IS ONE OF PARTICULAR CONCERN IN US-AUSTRALIA RELATIONS, END INNER QTE HE SAID.

4. QTE. INNER QTE THERE USED TO BE A LOT OF U.S. INVESTMENT IN AUSTRALIA, PARTICULARLY IN OIL AND NATURAL GASES. THESE INVESTORS HAVE PRETTY WELL WITHDRAWN IN THE PAST FEW YEARS BECAUSE THE CLIMATE HAS NOT BEEN ENCOURAGING.

5. QTE. INNER QTE. I HAVE NOT FORMED ANY PERSONAL OPINION ON THE POINT, BUT, FROM WHAT I HAVE READ IN THE PAPERS, IT SEEMS THE CHANGE IN GOVERNMENT MAY LEAD TO A MORE ENCOURAGING INVESTMENT CLIMATE - I HOPE IT WILL. END INNER QTE.

UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 02 CANBER 08559 290409Z

YM MR. HARGROVE - WHO DESCRIBED HIMSELF AS A INNER QTE REASONABLY INTELLIGENT, HONEST PERSON END INNER QTE - WAS SPEAKING BY TELEPHONE FROM SHREVEPORT, LOUISIANA, THE CITY IN WHICH HE WAS BORN 53 YEARS AGO, AND TO WHICH HE RETURNED ON BOXING DAY TO ATTEND AN UNCLE'S FUNERAL.

7. QTE. HIS NOMINATION AS AMBASSADOR TO AUSTRALIA IS EXPECTED TO BE ANNOUNCED BY THE WHITE HOUSE THIS WEEK. PENDING THAT FORMALITY, NEITHER THE WHITE HOUSE NOR THE STATE DEPARTMENT WOULD COMMENT ON THE NOMINATION, WHICH ALSO HAS TO BE APPROVED BY THE SENATE FOREIGN RELATIONS COMMITTEE.

8. QTE. THE DISCLOSURE THAT MR. HARGROVE WOULD BE NOMINATED TO SUCCEED THE SENIOR CAREER DIPLOMAT, MR. MARSHALL GREEN, CAUSED SOME SURPRISE.

9. QTE. STATE DEPARTMENT SOURCES SAID THERE HAD BEEN A WIDESPREAD FEELING IN WASHINGTON THAT AUSTRALIA WAS SUFFICIENTLY IMPORTANT TO THE U.S. TO WARRANT THE APPOINTMENT OF AN EXPERIENCED PROFESSIONAL DIPLOMAT.

10. QTE. INNER QTE. A POLITICAL APPOINTEE TENDS TO BE AN UNKNOWN QUANTITY AS FAR AS PROFESSIONALISM IS CONCERNED, END INNER QTE THE SOURCES SAID.

11. QTE. THEY DISCOUNTED A SUGGESTION THAT THE CHANGE OF GOVERNMENT IN CANBERRA MEANT THAT THE U.S. COULD NOW TAKE AUSTRALIA FOR GRANTED.

12. QTE. INNER QTE RELATIONS CERTAINLY HAVE BEEN EASED BY THE ARRIVAL OF THE NEW GOVERNMENT END INNER QTE THE SOURCES SAID. INNER QTE BUT IT'S SAFE TO SAY THERE WILL BE DISAGREEMENTS BETWEEN US AND THE NEW GOVERNMENT - PERHAPS NOT THE SAME KIND AS IN THE PAST - WHICH WILL NEED PROFESSIONAL HANDLING. END INNER QTE.

13. QTE. MR. HARGROVE, A LONG-STANDING MEMBER OF THE REPUBLICAN PARTY, WAS A MILITARY INTELLIGENCE OFFICER DURING WORLD WAR II.

UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 03 CANBER 08559 290409Z

QRM QTE. AFTER THE WAR HE WAS FOR 22 YEARS AN EXECUTIVE OF A TEXAS NATURAL GAS PIPELINE COMPANY. HE WORKED IN WASHINGTON FROM 1969 TO 1972 AS A SENIOR OFFICIAL OF THE U.S. POSTAL SERVICE.

15. QTE. HE IS NOW AN INDEPENDENT FINANCIAL CONSULTANT IN HOUSTON. HE IS MARRIED WITH FOUR CHILDREN.

16. QTE. INNER QTE. I WOULD HOPE TO LEAVE FOR AUSTRALIA ABOUT FEBRUARY 1, END INNER QTE HE SAID. END QTE.

17. THE AUSTRALIAN ON DECEMBER 27 RAN THE FOLLOWING EDITORIAL.

18. QTE. POOR CHOICE
IF 1976 IS TO BE THE YEAR OF AMERICA, IT SEEMS SADLY UN-
LIKELY THAT IT WILL BE THE YEAR OF AMERICA IN AUSTRALIA.

19. QTE. IT SHOULD BE, FOR AUSTRALIA HAS A NEW GOVERNMENT AMONG WHOSE PRIORITIES IS TO REDEFINE AND REVITALISE THE AMERICAN-AUSTRALIAN RELATIONSHIP. THIS IS A TASK BOTH NECESSARY AND DEMANDING FOR, AS WE HAVE SEEN, AMERICA IS ITSELF REDEFINING ITS OWN INTERNATIONAL OBJECTIVES AS IT ENTERS THE BICENTENARY OF ITS REVOLUTION.

20. QTE. SINCE THE JOHN CURTIN GOVERNMENT IN WORLD WAR II, NO AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT HAS LOST SIGHT OF THE IMPORTANCE OF THE DIPLOMATIC TIES BETWEEN WASHINGTON AND CANBERRA; OF THE NEED TO KEEP THEM AT ALL TIMES FRESH AND INFORMED. WHILE PREVIOUS GOVERNMENTS HAVE MADE AMBASSADORIAL APPOINTMENTS WHICH AT BEST COULD BE CALLED CONTROVERSIAL (MR. GORDON FREETH TO JAPAN, MR. VINCENT GAIR TO IRELAND AND MR. BRUCE GRANT TO INDIA ARE AMONG THEM), THE WASHINGTON POSTING HAS REGULARLY BEEN FILLED BY A TOP CAREER DIPLOMAT - BY MEN OF THE CALIBRE OF THE PRESENT AMBASSADOR, SIR PATRICK SHAW, WHO WAS DEPUTY-HEAD OF THE FOREIGN AFFAIRS DEPARTMENT AND WHO PREVIOUSLY REPRESENTED AUSTRALIA AT THE UNITED NATIONS.

21. QTE. UNFORTUNATELY THE ACCENT PLACED BY CANBERRA ON THIS SORT OF DIPLOMATIC PROFESSIONALISM HAS NOT BEEN RECIPROCATED. AMERICAN PRESIDENTS HAVE SENT US GREGARIOUS TEXANS AND
UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 04 CANBER 08559 290409Z

METHODIST LAY PREACHERS, AND FINE AMERICANS THEY WERE. BUT NOT UNTIL THE ADVENT OF MR. MARSHALL GREEN DID WE GET A TOP-NOTCH PROFESSIONAL. LAST MAY MR. GREEN WAS REASSIGNED.

22. QTE. NOW, AFTER AN UNCONSCIONABLE DELAY, A MR. JAMES HARGROVE HAS BEEN APPOINTED AS AMBASSADOR-DESIGNATE. THIS MR. HARGROVE IS A FINANCIAL CONSULTANT WHO IS NOT ONLY REMOVED FROM THE CENTRE OF THINGS; APART FROM A BRIEF STINT AS ASSISTANT POSTMASTER-GENERAL, HE HAS NEVER BEEN AT THE CENTRE. AT THE TIME OF THE ANNOUNCEMENT HE HAD BEEN NEITHER INTERVIEWED OR BRIEFED BY THE PRESIDENT ABOUT THE NATURE OF HIS ROLE. INDEED, MR. HARGROVE'S MAIN VISIBLE QUALIFICATION FOR AN AUSTRALIAN AMBASSADORSHIP WOULD SEEM TO BE THE FACT THAT HE WAS ONCE VICE-PRESIDENT OF A NATURAL GAS PIPELINE COMPANY.

23. QTE. NATURAL GAS IS OF COURSE OF PRIME INTEREST TO
AUSTRALIA. BUT AUSTRALIANS WILL BE DISAPPOINTED THAT THE
PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES HAS SEEMINGLY FAILED TO
APPRECIATE THAT THERE IS RATHER MORE TO THIS COUNTRY THAN
A LOT OF GAS. END QTE.
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